

Message Text

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PAGE 01 QUEBEC 00328 312042Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08 INR-07 LAB-04

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FM AMCONSUL QUEBEC

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1097

INFO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY

AMCONSUL MONTREAL

UNCLAS QUEBEC 0328

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, SOPN, CA

SUBJ: LE SOLEIL HIT BY JOURNALISTS' WALKOUT

1. LE SOLEIL, QUEBEC CITY'S LEADING DAILY NEWSPAPER, CEASED PUBLICATION YESTERDAY (AUGUST 30) AS JOURNALISTS AND EDITORIAL STAFF WENT ON STRIKE. WALKOUT MAY WELL BE A LONG ONE, AS BOTH SIDES ARE FAR APART AND HAVE BEEN GIRDING LINS FOR MONTHS IN IN ANTICIPATION OF STRIKE.

2. PRINCIPAL DISPUTES CENTER AROUND EDITORIAL POLICY, WITH JOURNALISTS DEMANDING INCREASED CONTROL OVER THEIR OWN STORIES. JOURNALISTS HAVE ALSO DEMANDED 20 PERCENT PAY INCREASE THIS YEAR AND 12 PERCENT NEXT YEAR, WHILE MANAGEMENT HAS COUNTERED WITH EIGHT AND SIX PERCENT. MANAGEMENT CLAIMS THAT, WITH FRINGE BENEFITS, JOURNALISTS DEMANDS AMOUNT TO 50 PERCENT PAY INCREASE.

3. LE SOLEIL'S JOURNALISTS HAVE BEEN RESTIVE OVER ISSUE OF CONCENTRATION OF PRESS OWNERSHIP IN QUEBEC SINCE PAPER WAS SOLD IN 1974 BY GILBERT FAMILY TO JACQUES FRANCOEUR'S UNIMEDIA PUBLISHING EMPIRE. FRANCOEUR WAS CLOSELY LINKED AT THE TIME TO MONTREAL PUBLISHING TYCOON PAUL DESMARAIS'S POWER CORPORATION, ALTHOUGH UNIMEDIA HAS SINCE BEEN ESTABLISHED AS SEPARATE

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GROUP.

4. WITH CIRCULATION OF 150,00 LE SOLEIL IS FOURTH LARGEST DAILY IN QUEBEC PROVINCE AND SEVENTH LARGEST IN CANADA. SINCE MANAGEMENT HAS INDICATED THAT IT HAS NO RPT NO PLANS TO PUBLISH DURING STRIKE, QUEBEC CITY WILL BE SERVED ONLY BY TABLOID JOURNAL DE QUEBEC (CIRCULATION 50,000) AND MONTREAL DAILIES.

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Message Attributes

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